

W.W.H.

—

December 19th, 1891.

PROLOGUE.

WILL one of us be found to say that the time of year is indifferent to him? Is there one who travels through the four seasons with an equal mind,—neither lingering with fond memory on the past, nor casting forward a hopeful eye?

If one there be to whom the summer solstice is a mere Astronomical Fact, which I doubt, the idea which draws us hither will cause him deep perplexity.

Why gather in mid-winter to chant the praises of an alien season?

Why seek to train the tendrils of recollection about the long golden days that are for us a part of the measureless yesterday?

Why twine a chaplet in honor of summer seas and skies,—of still and lonely lake now lying frozen into a deeper stillness yet,—of boisterous young river laughing in the roughness of its play and ready to turn its sport to grimmest earnest and still laugh on,—of that stream, ancient and mighty, which floats alike our tiny craft and the unwieldy monsters of the ocean,—of forest ways and mountain peaks,—of hours of golden ease,—of sweet fellowship between man and maid,—of friendships which bloom and blossom then, but now have shed their leaves and bear no pleasant fruit?

It is only because such thoughts are dear to us. It is only because for us life and dull routine are not synonyms, and even the submissive spirit sometimes demands that its shackles be loosed.

Free them from the trappings and trammels that disguise and restrain, we learn of one another something of what we

are in truth, and penetrate for a space within the mask of the Seeming.

The life is more than meat and the body than raiment.

Beyond the horizon lies another world.

Woe for us when ideals, questioned and mocked at, desert us and disappear.

Give ear to a poet:—

“Life now flees on feathered foot,
“Faint and fainter sounds the flute,
“Rarer songs of gods,—but still
“Somewhere on the sunny hill
“Or along the winding stream
“Through the meadows flits,—a dream;
“—Flits, but with so fair a face,
“Flies, but with so quaint a grace,
“None can choose to stay at home,
“All must follow, all must roam.
“This is unborn Beauty, she
“Now in air floats high and free,
“Takes the sun and breaks the blue;
“Late the hedgerow skimmed, or wet
“Her wing in silver streams, or set
“Her foot on temple roof.
“—Now again she flies aloof
“Coasting mountain clouds and kissed
“By the evening's amethyst.
“In wet wood and miry lane,
“Still we pound and pant in vain,
“Still with earthy foot we chase
“Waning pinion, fainting face,
“Still with gray hairs we stumble on
“Till, behold, the vision gone.
“Where hath fleeting Beauty led?
“To the doorway of the Dead.
“Life is gone;—but life was gay
“We have come the Primrose Way.

“THE SEDGE IS WITHERED FROM THE LAKE
AND NO BIRDS SING.”

WE are here to-night to do honor to Malbaie.

As lovers in antique times were wont to assemble, and sing the praises of her whom they claimed as Queen; so we with a like intent have met together, that each bearing his tribute in token of his loyalty may lay it upon the alter of his country's fame.

It is mid-winter of our discontent; and yet where such another band of loyal exiles? What other country can claim a like devotion to that which we year after year display? Dragging our petty pace day after day, from dreary Autumn until brightening Spring, that we may but once again behold our Mistress, breaking from out the nunnery of Winter, come forth unto the earth renewed, and bid us live.

And I—who thought I knew her better than all others; I—who prized her higher than all else,—I—to whom her name seemed sacred and praise itself a sacrilege; I alone, must raise the one discordant note in the pæan of to-night, and cry, “Beware! *La belle dame sans merci* hath thee in thrall.”

The place is haunted. You can see them, hear them, feel them everywhere; up on the hillside, out on the River, within around the fireplace;—ghosts of the unforgotten past.

Paddle out some cloudless day when the River lies unfurrowed, save where the tide-rips dance and sing in the glittering sunlight, and you will hear their voices drowned in the countless chorus of laughing wavelets.

Take your blanket and lie out upon the verandah some starlit night; and, through the quiet hours, you will see them

gather in pale groups, and hear them laugh and sing ; and their voices are those you just remember across many a bygone year.

Would we might hear them now.

"I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me; 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead.
For surely then I should have sight
Of those I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite."

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass.
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass ;
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind."

Oh ! for one small ghost !



POOKY-DOOK GOES EAST.

DOOKY-DOOK is not his real name, nor is he called so for short. In truth I know not the origin of the name, but think it must be some endearing term, sacred to the use of his more particular friends. One of these I myself once was, but since the events about to be related I scarcely speak his surname.

Pooky is nothing if not punctual, and it may be that to this habit he owes his name; for I would have you know that though the last of the Pooky-dooks, he traces his descent from an Indian chief, and "pooky" is the Indian word for "early," while "dook" or "duck" in that language is the equivalent of our own word "duck" or "bird."

Be that as it may, Pooky is a very early bird. Some ten months before we could possibly form any definite plans, he came to me, saying he wished to travel down with me to Murray Bay the following summer. I felt honored, and told him so, remarking that we would have plenty of time in which to get invited and catch our train. Summer at length came round—we were invited—and Pooky and I, to our mutual joy found we would be able to carry out our ancient project. Pooky had some far-fetched scheme, by which we were to assume the *rôle* of schoolmasters, and in this way put less money into the coffers of the steamboat and railway companies, and retain more of that necessary article in our own pockets. The plan seemed feasible, but dangerous—how to get out of it I did not know. Unwilling to offend my co-voyageur, I was constrained to tell him that business

necessitated my preceding him by a few days to Montreal, but that if he would join me there we might make the succeeding stage of our journey in company.

To this he agreed, reminding me that the boats left that place very punctually, and that I must take care not to be late, (instructions somewhat superfluous, considering we were bound to have at least the major portion of a day together before the boat started). The following Sunday brought Pooky, duplicate checks and all. Our steamer was to sail for Quebec at 3.30 that afternoon. Twenty minutes would have given ample time to drive from house to wharf, but Pooky, fearing disaster, had a cab on hand at one, with the result that we reached the boat in plenty of time to argue concerning the respective merits of being in good time and being two hours too soon—I arguing in favor of the former and he upholding the latter mode of procedure, saying that authority was in his favor, and mumbling, the while, something about the "early bird getting the worm."

While I was explaining to him that a worm that had to be waited for for two hours could scarcely be called early, and that, on his own shewing, his quotation must necessarily either be wrong, or at any rate inapplicable to the present case, the steamer starting ended further discussion.

Now began the more terrible woes which the strange behaviour of my companion was to plunge me into. From the first it was evident Pooky had something on his mind, so that I was little surprised when he left me, saying he must look after his luggage. Some time after, the desire to see what he was about seized me. Searching, I found him in close conclave with the agent of the company—I was introduced, and after some talk on various matters, my friend broached the subject of ticket scalping. He was a school-master, he said, and had a ticket in his possession—unused. Had the agent ever done any scalping?

Visions of a Lower Province prison and Pooky teaching French Canadians English, were floating before me, when fortunately the Captain chanced to pass. We were saved.

Pooky, forgetting scalping and everything else, made a dash at him—offered him a quarter—and told him to be sure and not forget about his luggage. He had mistaken captain for baggage-master, and retreated ignominiously. His mistake probably saved him from a felon's cell, and proved the more fortunate that it gave me an opportunity to explain to the agent that my friend had had a sunstroke and though not dangerous must not be taken seriously. On his return Pooky wore a dejected look—he had had a rebuff and felt it keenly. He was becoming more like himself when we reached Three Rivers, but could not be induced to leave the steamer and take a stroll through that interesting village; so telling him to take care of himself and to avoid anyone wearing a uniform, I took a ten-minutes' holiday. On my return we found the up-boat had come alongside, and went on board. Little did I anticipate the trouble I was afterwards to have in persuading Pooky that the up-boat was not our boat. He was sure it was our boat—he said he recognized the Captain.

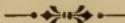
Leaving Three Rivers, we smoked awhile, till tired of even that, we turned in. It seemed to me I had scarcely closed my eyes, ere I was awakened by a curious grating sound as though our boat was running over a gravel bed. Looking up I saw what appeared in the uncertain light to be the dexter wing of a white hen, flapping in front of the looking glass. Closer investigation proved it was the *soi-disant* schoolmaster shaving. My rest utterly ruined, I am afraid I swore fluently at his inconsiderateness. He excused himself, telling me we were just at Quebec and would have no more than time to catch the Murray Bay boat. It was then not more than 4 a. m., but so persistent was he that I was prevailed upon to dress. It was a cold, windy morning and my friend's assurance that in about an hour's time we would have an opportunity of witnessing a sunrise scarcely met with the enthusiasm he evidently expected. Some three hours later we reached Quebec, and immediately on landing, proceeded to the steamer "Saguenay" which was lying a few hundred

yards lower down the river. Hailing a man who was scrubbing the decks we asked for information. To my query, "When does this boat start?" he answered in broken English: "To-morrow morning, perhaps." "But surely," I said, "there is a boat going down to-day" "Oh yes," he said, "but she not come up yet." Here was solid comfort. Even Pooky was impressed, and said he felt sleepy. We drove to the St. Louis and had breakfast; this meal over a stroll was suggested, but we had not gone far before I missed my companion. He subsequently explained that he had his doubts about the veracity of the man who had given us the information about the boat, and had thought it better to return to the wharf, so that being on the spot, he might note the boat's arrival himself. It is needless to say we did not miss that boat.

Leaving Quebec much of the unrest left my friend. He began to act more like a sane man. Possibly the salt air was having a beneficial effect; more likely he now recognized he was tolerably certain of reaching Murray Bay. There were no more changes to be made and most of his luggage was still in his possession. What had gone astray he had the written assurance of the Companies' agents to attend to. One thing alone worried him—would he recognize the place in time to land himself and luggage. This he provided for by begging me to remind him at Baie St. Paul that he would then have but two hours in which to prepare himself. This I did, and to his inexpressible joy we finally reached our destination.



A CHRISTMAS EVE GREE.



I WAS sitting, on Christmas Eve, alone in my library, the gas turned off, and the light of the fire the only illumination in the room. This fire behaved in a very proper and seasonable way; now bright, as though in sympathy with the happy hours which I was looking back upon; now less bright, as though it knew my thoughts were less happy. I say "less bright" and not "dull," and "less happy" and not "sad," because, indeed, my retrospect had but little of sadness in it, and consisted, even at its worst passages, rather in a want of joy than in a presence of sorrow. All the objects in the room had a certain charm of mystery about them, all definiteness of outline lost, and this was in keeping with the objects which met my mental vision, for they, too, had no sharp lines, but, instead, were rounded by the atmosphere of time. Gradually my eyes stopped ranging from fire to picture, from picture to soft-carpeted floor, and rested upon one painting alone, which seemed to have appropriated more than its share of firelight, so that it stood out from the surrounding objects. At this moment I was musing upon the coming day, and idly pondering upon the difference between the to-morrow and the time of year portrayed in the picture, between the snow-covered streets of the city and the slice of Summerland held within the frame (a distant headland, a stretch of calm sea, and, nearer, a row of trees splendid with leaves) when to my amazed consciousness the fact became known that one of the trees in the picture was moving. This, of course, was palpably absurd, and when I reflected that it was Christmas time—the time for old yarns of strange and weird and ghostly appearances—I began to cry out, "Oh! chestnut!" until I

reflected that the tree might imagine I was simply guilty of the impertinence of calling it by a wrong name, and I therefore desisted.

Meanwhile, the tree had stepped from the frame, and was walking towards me. There was nothing for it but to rise and bow. I did so. It rustled out, "Good evening! but, pray be seated," and walked to the fire. Then began the strangest series of experiences on the part of my eyes, for the tree seemed to perform human acts, and yet, at the same time, it never lost its tree form. For instance, it now appeared to stand before the fire, to spread its legs, and even to hold out its coat tails to the welcome warmth.

"I am rather a Britisher in the matter of a fire," said he.

"So I perceive."

"You are surprised to see me, I know?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, the fact of the matter is, I've wanted to have a chat with you for some time, and, to-night, when you looked at me, I could not stand the temptation. Truth to tell, I have a little Christmas message for you, but, if you don't mind, I will first talk about anything that comes into my head."

"All right," I said, "I am delighted to see you."

"I think we'll talk in English," said the tree, and he seemed to wink at me as he said it. "Your French!" and he bent down and rubbed his legs with his hands, as he shook with laughter. (You may say he had no legs, and only one trunk; I admit it. That he had no hands; I admit it. I simply tell you what he did.)

"Do you remember," he asked, "the time you took that *caleche* man far out into the road, whilst you talked French to him. He kept very grave as he listened to you. We also were listening. Afterwards, we heard the man tell the other *caleche* men about it. He was not so grave then, nor were the others. Their cheeks swelled like large potatoes, and they sputtered as though the potatoes were frying."

"They gave you a name when their laughter let them."

"What did they call me?"

"They called you the Strange Architect." "Why?" "Because you put a lot of big stones on top of one another and thought you had made a house." "Oh! they were fine big words," said the *caleche* man, "but they came what the English call, 'heegledy-peegledy,' and there were no small words for mortar."

I thought I would change this subject, but he saved me the trouble.

"I came to talk to you to-night because you listen well; at least, you listen well in the summer. Ah! it makes such a difference to us. There were several in the house you lived in who listened."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the noise we made with our leaves was pleasant to, and had a meaning for them. Now, confess, was it not sweet, when the day was soft and balmy, and you lay amongst the daisies and listened to the little stream of water, which could be only faintly heard, and to our leaves as they trembled and rustled."

"It was indeed," I said, "but, as you say, many of us listened."

"Oh! yes, and one, at least, used to listen at night, when all the rougher noises were gone, and I think we used to feel that for him we ought to sway more sweetly and give a better sound. Don't you men and women talk of a man leading 'a larger life' than others? Well, perhaps those who lead it need more than others the music which we can give." The tree repeated thoughtfully, "yes, it is sweeter for us when we know that our songs are heard and liked."

There was silence for a minute, and then, in a bunch of laughter, these words were shot at me:—"That cow: was there ever such a cow! How we used to laugh. You did not help much in looking after it, did you? Only big resolutions: no mortar, eh!"

"Do you know," he went on, "I believe you would miss that cow, if you lost it. I know we all loved it, for the way in

which it filled the field with laughter all day long. But has there no stake ever been made which could hold a cow in check? I'm inclined to think," said the tree, as he stretched his legs further apart, and held out his coat tails to a still greater extent, "that the ordinary, mild, well-behaved cow would seem a poor thing to you all. Now, the tree next to me has all sorts of flecks and flaws, but I like them: So wish your cow. Four demure legs and a stolid' box of red body, free from volatility as the Sphinx, would be a sorry substitute for our capricious friend; don't you think so? And even its mellow mutterings during the night—"

I murmured, "but the neighbors—"

"Ah! yes, the neighbors,"—and the tree wrinkled its brow and appeared to reflect.

"I must tell you," he added, as he negligently sat himself down in an easy chair, placed his right foot on his left knee, and was apparently about to ask me for a pipe to smoke, "we hear a lot of things down at the end of the garden which you would give a great deal to hear. The little children prattle so gaily, and we learn so much of you all from their point of view. Sometimes we catch whisperings between two, which no other human beings are to hear; when the man's voice speaks with great hesitation until the woman has answered, and then—but even trees love lovers, so I say no more. And at times we hear still better things, for one who, long years ago, whispered to the owner of the sweet face near to him, now old, then young, will recall the former days, and in the quiet of our shade their lips meet again. Then, too, the *caleche* men do not always speak of fares, for, often, their talk is of their homes and "*Numero Cinquante*" is not Number 50, but a father, whose little children love him."

"But I must be giving you my Christmas message," and the tree spoke with a steadier, sweeter note, as he arose from his chair and stood in a thoughtful attitude before me. "One day in the summer," he went on, "a girl passed under my boughs when no human being was within earshot. The recollection of a great sorrow seemed to come over her, and

and I saw that her face was filled with pain as she murmured to herself, 'Courage!' She passed up to the house, and, presently, I heard her laugh ring out above that of all the others, and some of you, talking together, said "what a merry heart she has!" But others (I was glad that you were of them) were silent, and I knew that, sometimes, they who can hear trees laugh, can hear hearts cry. I was not given any message to you then, for the meaning of such heroism had not been taught to me, but since then I have learned it, and I come to speak to you."

"If you would journey with me now to Murray Bay, you would find, for daisied fields, wide stretches of snow; for whispering breezes, cold biting winds; for summer's laughter, winter's sad silence; and for leafy trees, gaunt naked bones of boughs. How can you know, as I bend towards my comrade next to me, and laugh with him the summer through, that in the winter we are robbed of all our joy and are possessed by an over-mastering grief. In the lives of many human beings there have been such winters of sorrow, but those who have endured them have, for the sake of those around them, said to themselves, 'Courage!' You count the music of my leaves sweet and full of music. My message to you is that there are deeper and better notes in the soul's laughter of many of those around you!"

"Good bye! a happy Christmas to you!"

"Good bye," I said, "a happy Christmas to *you*!"

"We, thus, as the tree walked back and took up its old place in the picture. Visions chased one another through my brain: bright laughing hours came back to me: a sense of the great happiness given to me stole over me, and then the message of the tree was burnt into my heart. If any one, full of care, had entered the room, I trust that he would have known that I had listened to the tree.

Gradually the vision of a fair face became vivid and life-like to me, and, as I lay back in my chair, thinking of the tree's message, words by Lowell which had been spoken to me years before sounded again like sweet bells in my ears.

"I would not have this perfect love of ours
"Grow from a single root, a single stem,
"Bearing no goodly fruit, but only flowers
"That idly hide life's iron diadem :
"It should grow alway like that eastern tree,
"Whose limbs take root and spread forth constantly ;
"That love for one, from which there doth not spring
"Wide love for all, is but a worthless thing.
"Not in another world, as poets prate,
"Dwell we apart above the tide of things,
"High floating o'er earth's clouds on faery wings ;
"But our pure love doth ever elevate
"Into a holy bond of brotherhood
"All earthly things, making them pure and good."



WHERE WROTE YOU THIS?

THESE lines were written (but not sent) in answer to a letter asking:—"Do you remember going through St. Irénée, on a certain summer evening?" ; and enclosing the following and other verses—

"I climbed the lofty road between
The river and the northern hills,
And rested leisurely,
To watch the mighty river flow,
With all its miles of shade and sheen
Down to the mighty sea,
And far beneath me resting low
The village of St. Irénée."

Where writ you this? Ah! Well I know,
When chin in hand you lay,
And watched the mighty river flow
At eve of summer's day.

You felt the breeze within your hair,
And its soft whispering sigh;
And turned your elbow in its lair
The more at ease to lie.

You saw the ruddy mountains change
From light to darker hue;
And passed in thought beyond the range
To lands beyond the view.

You listened to the leaves o'erhead;
And distance' silent sound
Beneath you from the channel bed
Crept up, and swam around.

So the thread of song unwound
Gently from your inner mind,
Taking tone from every sound,
Running rhythmic with the wind.

Till you held it, half complete,
Resting in a poet's haze,
Waiting for its winding-sheet,
Woven in the winter days.



JOHN KNOX.

"**B**UT are you sure, Mr. Young, that there is nobody you would rather have go with you, because if so, I would —" "Oh, no, there's nobody I would prefer, I assure you, and we like to show new people, so to speak, how the thing is done."

This was how it all began; it didn't seem as if anything of very great import could possibly be the outcome of such an exchange of pleasantries, but by five o'clock on that beautiful Murray Bay day, of the class already mentioned, or to be mentioned, the awful results of an invitation accepted began to show themselves.

John Knox Tibbits and James McGregor Young, "sitting intimate" in one of the very finest *calèches*, are well on their way to run the rapids. One of the Malbaies had been sent on ahead, "kindness of Mr. Pomero," for their especial use. As they bumped down Blake Avenue, resonant with new-born gravel, and through the village, many and wonderful were the tales of prowess with which the voyageur entertained his sympathetic listener. Our friend Chemist the Druggist, coming from his dwelling house to his shop to answer in the negative a certain young lady's demand as to Walker's Candy, heard the gentleman with the curly hair on the *top* of his face declare with great unction: "Oh, yes, about three or four hundred times, never upset, get a little wet sometimes on rainy days, rather prefer taking a good many of them backwards;" and Mathie unconsciously, but with prophetic instinct, muttered as he turned the heavy black key in the door behind him, "To be well shaken before taken."

On go Greg and John Knox past the mounds of questionable origin, round the turn with ruts in it, that would have

puzzled Jehu to avoid, and our hero soon catches sight of his favorite river stealing out under the shelter of the Cap à l'Aigle shore, soon to join in the *danse* that is on the tapis as the evening's amusement for the Unruly Order of White-caps, in the prosecution of whose pranks the seemingly peaceful Murray is soon to play a leading part.

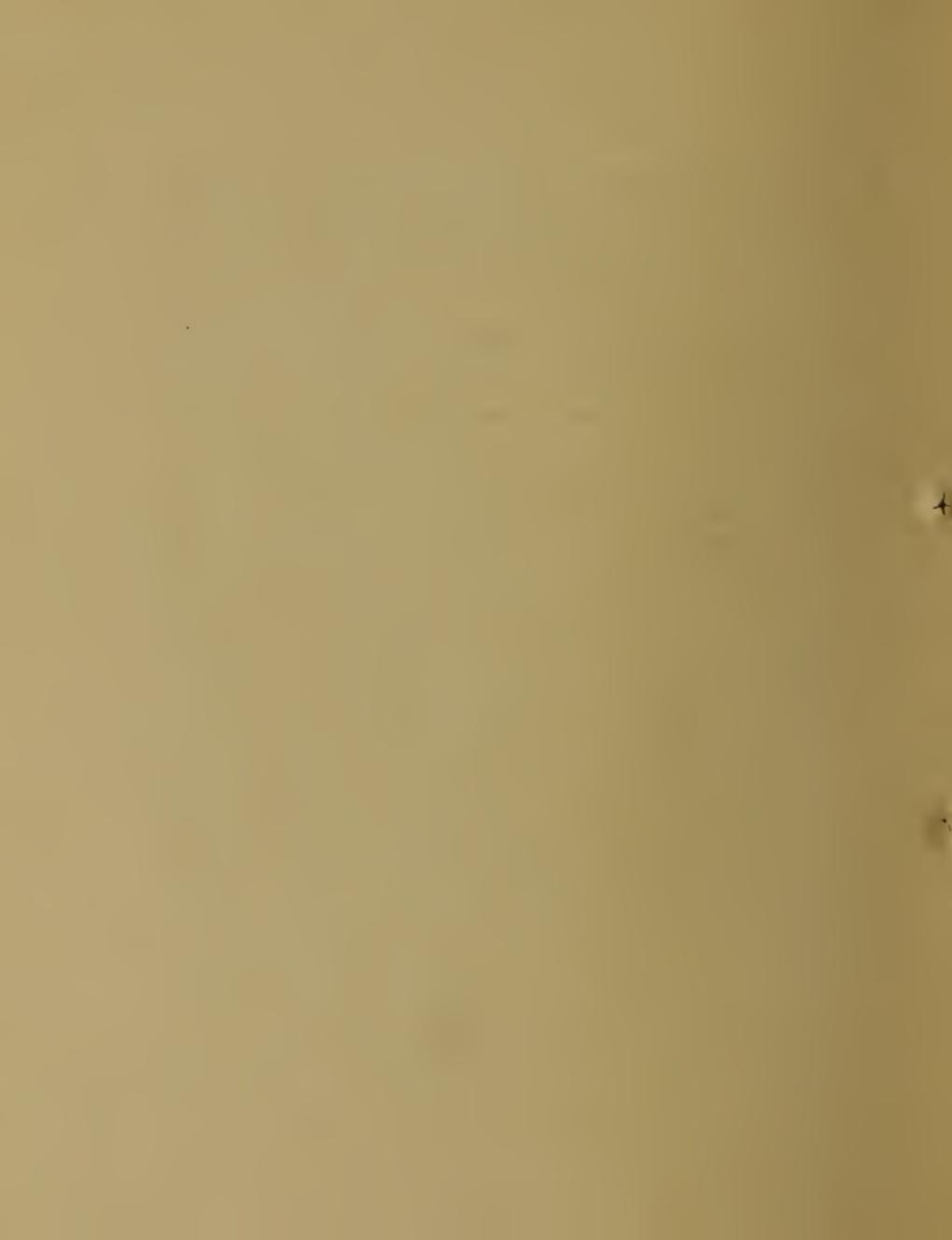
The drivers get nearer their destination, and the tales of past adventures though listened to with the same polite attention do not succeed each other with that rapidity that marked their predecessors. If we are not mistaken the number of times that Greg had run the rapids was gradually reduced from three hundred or so, to about thirty, with three or four up-sets sandwiched in, that seemingly had escaped the *raconteur's* memory at the time of his former estimate.

An hour's drive lands them at the bridge, where they find everything ready for them, and all that Tibbits is called upon to do is to sit still and look to his front. Somebody goes on ahead, and with the usual shouts and enquiries as to "trimming" and order of march, the remainder of the canoes make for the "slide" of the first rapid. Greg takes this in fine form, straight as an arrow, gets his bow right into the waves, presses the butt-on and the Peterborough does the rest.

Tibbits is fairly exuberant: "Really, Mr. Young, that was very skilful, now tell me, would that Indian, Nicholas, have been able to do that?" Greg thinks he would have and shuts his teeth for rapid number two. Everything goes well till they reach the turn to the left, when the passenger, turning round to ascertain the cause of the sudden stoppage, is surprised to see his conductor in the water, evidently looking for something under the canoe; the search, however, he soon gives up, and with a dilation on the ease with which a Malbaie can be stopped in the middle of the swiftest *chate*, by a strong back stroke, jumps into the ark, and with a few vigorous lunges forward, to the sound of crumbling wood, Greg sends his craft bouncing along on its downward career. The three or four rapids above the "Teaser" were as Greg

suggested, regular "Marks" for that gentleman, so they entered our old enemy with hopes high. Just at its head, however, Greg was a little undecided as to which side of the two big boulders he should take. The Malbaie made the decision and ran right up on the outside one. John turns round to expostulate, but much to his surprise and discomfiture finds himself squeezed between Greg and a seeming Mountain, filling the position of punching bag to the festive Murray that seemed determined that they should assign to it, all interest in their pedal extremities. This they almost agree to do, and each lending the canoe a helping arm proceed to execute one of the prettiest *pas à trois* ever seen, so the people on the bank said. Now J. McG. is holding forth in dulcet tones from his elevated, though fast dropping position on the bow, to Tibbits, who, joyful at the idea of again seeing the sky, is disposing of the intervening water as befits a temperance man, while rising in a dignified way on the stern of the canoe, succumbing to Greg's irresistible pressure. As they come to a hill they decide to walk, and amid encouragements from all sides, showers of cushions, paddles and back-boards, they take turns in leading the procession, disappearing at the proper times and through it all laughing as loud as the portion of their lungs occupied by the Murray will allow of. With numerous apologies and copious explanations as to the change in the channel from James McGregor, and suggestions from spectators as to changes of garments, the happy couple left by the same boat for Murray Bay, where they purposed spending a few weeks at the seashore with friends.





TOLD IN A TENT.

I WAS much impressed by his story, but part of that impression was no doubt due to the mood of the moment and the circumstances under which it was related to me. I would ask you to forget your surroundings, and for the nonce to go into camp with me on a lonely height in the great plateau of the Grand Jardin des Ours.

My friend and I had been fishing the river at no great distance from the spot where we were encamped, and had scarcely noticed the storm clouds that were banking in the West. At sunset, and when our sport was at its best, the storm fell upon us with great fury. Before we could reach our tent we were thoroughly drenched, and we found our little canvas home in a fair way to being demolished by the driving gusts heavy with rain. But for a clump of stunted firs to windward, it could not have withstood the squalls which were constantly increasing in violence. By dint of driving extra pegs and piling heavy stones we soon had the guy-ropes taut, and the tent erect. Still we sometimes feared that the hardly-tried canvas and cords could not withstand the strain, and by turns clung to the pole and bore against it during the severer gusts.

Dry clothes were speedily donned, and then we began to investigate the contents of our provision sacks. We were at a low ebb indeed, and after three weeks of wandering among the mountains, had run down to biscuit crumbs and a piece of very questionable pork. Tea there was, but a fire would mean getting wet again, if indeed skilful handling could have induced the wet wood to boil a kettle.

Our two men had left for La Galette early in the afternoon intending to bring on our reserve of provisions, but meeting

acquaintances at that centre of social and business activity loitered to gossip, and had only made a small part of the ten-mile return journey when they wisely decided, in view of the approaching storm and the gathering darkness, to go back to La Galette and spend the night under its hospitable but unsavory roof.

So we two were alone in one of the loneliest places I verily believe on this wide earth. Mile on mile of moss,—brown, grey, lavender, yellow, ash-color,—stretching away to North, South, East and West. Ghostly ancient Brûlé;—the trees here fallen in sheafs, there standing lifeless and twigless—looking on the bare hill-tops, like the lonely white hairs which emphasize baldness. Only here and there in the little gullies a touch of green—dwarf larches, tiny spruces a hundred years old, and always moss—moss softer than Persian rug,—moss to the ankle, moss to the knee, boulders covered with it, the very quagmires mossed over, so that the most careful traveller might find himself suddenly up to his arm-pits in the horrible sucking blackness below.

From time to time the flashes of lightning showed through the door of the tent a glimpse of this endless desolation, and in the distance a rough tumbling stretch of the river.

After making some sort of a meal, we sat and minded the tent pole and smoked. My companion seemed absent minded and a trifle nervous, and my occasional remarks were disregarded or answered at random. Of a sudden, when I was discussing the merits of a new fly, he broke in with the remark: "It is strange that they never found a trace of him,—Labbé, I mean. You have heard his story?"

I had known the poor fellow well, and remembered his disappearance. He had been in camp with me in the summer of 1884;—a little under-sized, dried-up fellow, but hard as nails and able and willing to carry an incredible load at a pace which kept us jogging behind him. That very Autumn he had gone out of his senses, and made for the woods. Striking in at some point near the Passe Des Monts he had wandered for more than a week among the moun-

tains without food, gun or matches, and had come out at La Galette where he was detained and sent home. His people watched him carefully, but for some weeks he showed no further desire to escape. One day, the precautions being relaxed, he again fled to the woods, and all efforts to find or overtake him failed. Never again was he seen by mortal man,—“never again,” I said, but hear my friend’s story:—

My friend went on: “Do you know that curious superstition of the Bersimis Indians? They believe that insane persons who die without a priest’s blessing become Wendigos—creatures with supernatural powers and inhuman instincts, that wander for all time seeking to do harm to whatever comes in their way; soulless beings with irresistible strength; blood-thirsty werewolves with nothing human about them but their form. A cruel, debased and darkly superstitious people are these Bersimis Indians. I myself have seen them shoot a poor young girl with the beads of her rosary because she had shewn some trace of insanity, and they hoped by this means to prevent her from becoming a Wendigo after death.

I never told anyone what happened to me in the Summer of 1885, because I do not like being disbelieved; but the storm and the surroundings to-night bring it so vividly to my mind that I feel tempted to risk your credulity. It is very odd, too, that the men are away to-night, and it is odd that I allowed our camp to be pitched so near that infernal spot.

You know the Rivière à L’ Enfer—River of Hell in truth it is; but you mentioned that you had never penetrated to its head-waters, and, if you will take my advice, you never will. Of course it was stories of big fish that took me up over those dreary inmountains which lie to the left. Fortin told me that in winter he had put baited hooks through the ice, and returning later found that his tackle had vanished. Again he tried, with heavier gear, but the result was the same. Then he used cod-line and cod-hooks, but everything was torn away by whatever took the bait. Heaven knows what the lake contains; nothing came to *my* fly but a few ink-black trout three or four inches long.

The lake is on the very summit of the mountain, and, fishing on it, I could look over its low rim on two sides upon a prospect of forty or fifty miles of bare rock and brûlé. It lies, I feel sure, in the crater of an extinct volcano, and the depth of it is prodigious. All my lines together would not fetch bottom a hundred yards from shore, and the water is different in color from any I know. Imagine transparent ink and you pretty nearly have it,—as different as possible from the honest brown of the Murray River water, or even the opaque blackness of that of the Rivière à L' Enfer. Under water the banks slope down at an angle of forty-five degrees, and huge black rocks seem to be hanging there, ready at a touch to plunge into the depths.

We pitched our tent on the only level spot we could find—a patch of fine black sand within a few yards of the water's edge. Behind us the summit of the mountain a few feet higher was a mass of irregular weathered boulders, with one or two dead hemlocks the height of a man still stretching out a few gnarled and distorted branches. In front of us lay the lake, and beyond, the dismal panorama of irregular mountain shapes. My grub had fallen lower than our own is at present, and I sent off the men to bring up supplies from La Galette which, of course, was rather nearer than it now is to us. They left early in the afternoon, and had not been gone long before the clouds began to gather in the sou'-west. The sun dropped into them, and it rapidly grew dark. In the intense and utter silence I almost fancied I could hear the rushing of the storm scud advancing overhead. Not a breath of wind or the faintest sound of anything animate or inanimate. I started to sing, but my voice sounded so utterly dismal that I gave over. Soon the first few big drops began to spatter on the lake, and then came the wind up the mountain with a roar that after the silence was appalling. I had tried to make the tent secure, but the first rush of the storm would have carried it clear away if I had not hung to the pole with my whole weight.

I began to give up hope that my men would return. They knew that I had sufficient food to last me till the morrow,

and they did not know how sadly I would be in need of their assistance and companionship before the night was over. Sitting with my arm around the tent pole, I heard through the roar of the wind and the dashing of the rain, a call. Even as I answered it the doubt came over me that it was a human cry at all, and when it was repeated I tried to convince myself that it came from some loon that had taken up its quarters for the night on the lake. The night was the wildest I have ever spent under canvas. The lightning flashed continuously, and shewed me the surface of the lake torn up into patches of white spoon-drift that the gusts swept across it in sheets. The wind had a voice that one rarely hears save in a gale at sea. Certainly the loneliness, the storm, and above all that strange cry affected my spirits, for I had no heart to eat, and with a blanket over my shoulders sat holding the swaying tent-pole and longing for the companionship even of a dog. What would I not have given for a good horn of whiskey, but there was not a drop left in my flask.

At length the wind lulled for a moment, but I heard it roaring towards me up the mountain side, and just as it burst on the tent that inhuman cry came again to my ear,—nearer, much nearer. I don't set up for being particularly brave," (my friend has about as steady a nerve as is ever given to a mortal), "but I usually can keep the upper hand of myself. Now I tell you plainly I was losing my grip. The infernal voice was not the cry of any beast or bird, nor could it be my men by any chance, as it came from the side of the mountain away from La Galette.

I sat with my nails digging into the tent-pole, and actually found myself beginning to repeat with a stiff, day tongue some idiotic nursery rhyme. Again, and close beside me, the cry—the unmistakeable voice of some being human or diabolic—hoarse—broken—a sound so fearful that I choked and gasped for breath,

I wrenched myself up and leaped to the door of the tent.

Five paces from me in the howling blackness stood some creature, human in form, and as I gazed a flash of lightning

shewed me that which I would give a year of life to stamp out of my memory.

Uttering that fearful cry which I cannot forget, the creature sprang at me, and I threw myself into the hellish pond which in the daytime I would not have swum for a kingdom.

I dived deep and far, and when I rose struck out for the farther shore with frantic strokes. Ever and anon the hideous voice came to me, rising above all other sounds and giving me a hideous nightmare sensation of paralysis. Stopping no instant when I reached the shore I plunged through the darkness down the mountain-side—falling, clutching, struggling, I somehow reached the bottom and fell, blind and covered with bruises, on a bed of moss.

When the blood got out of my ears I listened, panting and quivering, to hear if I was pursued. There was no sound but the distant boom of the retreating storm. I was but a short distance from the river, and to my joy saw the light of a fire a few hundred yards away, and staggering and stumbling towards it found my men, who had camped there when overtaken by the darkness.

There was no sleep for me that night, and next day I went out of the woods and the men returned to bring in the tent and traps. They met with nothing out of the way, but I don't believe their heart was in the search."

"And what was it?"

"Pray God it was not poor Labb  in the flesh."



THE PORTAGE.

If the exigencies of this lecture compel me to regard the portage as a prosaic expedient for getting pork and stuff to the first place where you can lay them down again, it is not to be supposed that I am indifferent to loftier and more æsthetic considerations upon the subject.

I appreciate fully that the portage, linking as it does the mysterious waters of a strange and aboriginal world with the well-known channels of to-day, abounds in historical and traditional associations. An humble desire to describe the portage as we find it—unembarrassed by sentiment—forces me to dismiss all of these from our strictly scientific investigation, and I refer to them only to rebut the presumption that because I give a good deal of information, stick to hard facts, and am statistical, I am not of a contemplative and highly imaginative frame of mind.

Ask any one who has portaged with me, if I ever refused to sit down and contemplate with him.

The portage is essentially American. The configuration of the country, the nomadic disposition of its population, and the keen delight of the native women in this form of recreation combined to place portaging among the foremost of the national industries, and the portage upon a foundation sufficiently secure to withstand the disturbing influences of the alien race.

The people of the United States have not cherished the sacred heritage so committed to their trust, and the portage, unlike the sister blessings of tobacco and smallpox, has never attained to any measure of popularity. I am told that it is

difficult to find a well-formed portage in any of the large American cities, and that, even in the more conservative rural districts, the shriek of the Pullman car now disturbs those quiet valleys where once, beneath the shimmering shade of the forest path, the original freeholder sought the still waters of his river course.

To the French Canadian *habitant* belongs the glory of developing the primitive path of the North American Indian into the portage of to-day. His intuitive discernment of the greatest distance between any two points, and his love for a moist and uneven footing, have elevated the portage to its present lofty standard. By hard work and intelligence he has brought it pretty close to perfection. I am a simple minded "*Anglais*," from whom a suggestion in these matters were well-nigh a sacrilege; but I cannot help thinking that he might have improved his handiwork by a judicious use of snakes. Fancy Lac Carré portage in bad weather, with a rhombohedral pack, and a hatful of rattlers sprinkled somewhere along the line, and you perceive the force of my observation. However, it is with the portage as we find it that we are to deal, and it is the actual, not the ideal, portage that is portrayed in the following notes.

The most impressive characteristics of a portage are its length and its condition. In matter of length, portages range from the "*tout court*" (all short), the pygmy of the tribe, to the "*pas mal loin*" (not badly far), the commonest variety, and so on up to the "*bien long*," who is the fat woman of the show. The "*pas mal loin*" embraces everything above a one-rest carry. If the portager can fairly claim and appreciate a rest on the march, he is out on a "*pas mal loin*." "Carré" is a "*pas mal loin*." So are some of the Galette portages, and one of the La Cruche set, viz: that which points squarely to the spot where the gamiest, speckledst and second largest of last year's trout was skilfully landed.

The weak point about the "*tout court*" portage is that you never know of a portage that it is a "*tout court*" until you have come to the end of it; and if there is any difference be-

tween the joy of knowing that a short portage is finished and that a long portage is finished, I am not prepared to say that the short portage has the better of it. The well-established custom of guides to refrain from announcing in advance the length of a portage, and the reasons for its existence concerning which there is much difference of opinion, might well be discussed here; but it has been deemed advisable to postpone, for further consideration on another occasion, the idiosyncracies of the Lower Canadian guide. I have never been over a "*bien long*" portage; but a friend of mine tells me that he can imagine nothing from which a better conception of eternity can be derived than from an acquaintance with the "*bien long*".

The XXX of portages, as regards condition, is the "*comme un chemin de fer*" (like a railroad) otherwise known as the "*pas de misère*" (no misery). There are precious few specimens of this class. A gentleman named Savard once assured me that he was well acquainted with several such. He gave me to understand that the "*pas de misère*" in question was very popular with bicyclists and ladies' schools; but I am not sure that it would be well to place implicit confidence in any statement which this enthusiast should feel called upon to make. From all I am able to gather concerning the "*pas de misère*," it seems doubtful if it is entitled to be ranked in the category of true portages.

Real portages are divided into two classes—the "*vilain*" (the villain), and the "*sacré vilain*" (the holy villain). The "*vilain*" is jaggy—very jaggy, and his worst points are these: (a) swampy holes, (b) stony holes, and (c) *brûlé*. Each of these phases of his iniquity has its special disciples prepared to place their pet abhorrence in the front rank of portagic woes. Personally, I put my faith in stony holes as the most winsome of tortures. You can get what Humpty-Dumpty had quite as effectually in these as in the most improved timber complications, and you can't get wetter (though perhaps you may slimier) in any hole, swampy or otherwise. Where stony holes' hemstitch comes in is in the rocks that give it a name

When these have trifled with the erring shin-bone, poor Tibia is decorated as if she had gone through a cornsheller.

The "*sacré vilain*" has no good ground. No portion of its length is ungarnished with some one or more of the occasional atrocities of the less favoured "*vilain*," and the sole variety of a stroll over the "*sacré vilain*" lies in the playful combination of any two or more of the aforesaid;—swampy hole with *brûlé*;—stony hole with *brûlé*;—swampy hole stony, and stony hole swampy;—and these latter in turn *brûlé* and un*brûlé*.

If I felt called upon to detract from the popularity of Mr. Fox's Book of Martyrs I should undertake to describe for you the attractions of the "*bien long sacré vilain*" combination; but I propose to leave its delights to the memory of those who have experienced them, and to the imagination of those who have not.

With the help of the foregoing observations you should now be ripe for a little technical learning as to the matter in hand, and firstly then, of the pack.

Physically, the pack is a solid substance totally unlike all other substances (and all other packs) in weight, shape, consistency and centre of gravity. In respect to its weight, it is considered a fair jag for one, by all other than its bearer, who views it as a neat undertaking for two. If M =the muscle of the propeller, W , the weight of the incubus, and T , the tump-line—the pack (P) will move forward in a given line according to the remainder (if any) of M over $W \times T^2$.

Chemically speaking, the pack is a compound of camp necessities ($C N^2$), ranging from the fine arts to the axe; and mathematically, it is the unit of the carry, which, multiplied by the bearers, gives for product the board and lodging of the community.

Every man, subject to reasonable control, is a free agent in the selection of his pack from the general assortment lying about the mouth of the portage. For my own part, I never avail myself of this privilege, and find it a good working rule to take whatever burden the Captain may assign to me.

I do not mean to pose as a gentleman who would scorn to take advantage of his brethren in the way of something light and comfortable ; but I have never felt confidence in my own judgment that any particular pack possessed these characteristics. Packs are so notoriously treacherous and deceptive, both in their avoirdupois and their "ridability," that the honest seeker after a soft snap can never be dead sure that he has it. Every pack is an experiment and a revelation, and the chap who sneaks a fair seeming one aside for his private joy, is as likely to come to grief and bitter disappointment as he who carries whatever chance brings to his hand.

Moreover, under my system, you have the considerable advantage that, if your pack proves cantankerous and pounds the earth with you, you have some one to blame. There is nothing so soothing to the twisted neck as to oil it internally with copious and well-founded execration.

However, if these considerations do not weigh with you, and you choose to pick your destruction for yourself, the following hints may not be amiss.

In the first place, never judge a pack by its size. I have seen towering three-deckers, two bags deep, that were simple golden-haired dollies alongside of a puny little budget you could stow in the fish basket.

Number two is, steer clear of the tinware. Tin is a respectable, well-behaved and flexible metal, but when loving hands have coaxed the knives and forks and plates and cups and soap and groceries into a pail of it, you have a cubic foot of the hardest, least-yielding and most unbendable composition that ever thumped a snowy neck. Compactly put up, the tinware is at long odds the most attractive parcel of the outfit, but,—Oh my brother! Look beyond the pleasing semblance, or you will tangle your spinal column with your wind-pipe before the day is done.

My third and last hint relates to the whiskey. A camp without medicine is a dangerous undertaking, and there are gentlemen of the party who will be very, very angry, if, by your misadventure, aught ill befall the Rev. John Kilmarnock.

True, the bottle pack is never heavy; when you rest, there are anxious hands to ease your burden up and down; when you march, anxious voices to announce the perils of the path and anxious eyes to mind the swinging and swaying of your pack. Yet the keenest may stumble, and to be left wounded and alone in the pathless forest to die is a sad and bitter end.

I had almost forgotten to refer to the canoe as an article of portage. One is so indebted to it for its manifold services that it would be most thankless to begrudge the labor involved when the carrier changes places with the carried. These are especially the sentiments of those who, like myself, have not yet attained to the undoubted honor of being told off to a canoe. I had a little sparring once with the big Malbaie, which I do not propose to discuss further than to make my boast that I got her from one navigable water into another. Sammy Blake was bottle holder on that occasion, and assisted me in kicking it along the last ten yards and into the lake.

I believe that when one has mastered the intricacies of securing a proper balance and a comfortable distribution of its weight, the canoe is not more troublesome than the average pack. If good and evil are fairly divided in this vale of tears, the canoeman ought to do a little more work than the rest of us, for he certainly achieves more glory. I have observed that when ladies honor an expedition, they bestow more sympathy and admiration upon one bearer of the graceful canoe, than upon the entire brigade of those who stagger beneath the prosaic pack. I have further observed on these occasions that it requires at least three strong men to lift and steady the canoe on the shoulders of the Samson who is eventually to run away with it. If you can grind your teeth like Sammy Blake, or groan like Graham Thompson, you are wasting your talents tugging vile provender by a strap; your place is beneath the inverted canoe, where you can play to the grand stand, and give out signs of great mental and physical strain.

I was about to observe that the weight of your pack is a small, perhaps the least, factor in the discomforts of the portage. It is the hang, the fit, the balance, (portagers understand the point), that really determines whether your outing is a pleasant recreation or a racking torture. This hang, fit or balance depends almost entirely upon the skilful or faulty adjustment of the tump-line. There may be inherent vices in the pack which incline it to geometrical eccentricities, but these may be corrected and modified by the proper attaching of the line.

"Tump-line" is thus defined by an eminent authority:— "A broad strap, the theory of whose use is that it keeps a pack, otherwise unmanageable, in such a position on the body of the carrier as will enable him to bear it." As the learned professor was addressing readers versed in the art, he has not thought it necessary to refer to the phenomenal quality of *elasticity* common to all tump-lines. The cause has not, as yet, been definitely determined, but it is a scientific fact that the tump-line which, at 9.15 a.m., is a thought too tight for a collar, is, at 9.20 a.m., a trifle too loose for a belt. The tump-line is usually worn at the forehead, but this is not imperative. It is considered equally good form to wear it at the waist, but as the chief advantage claimed by the advocates of this fashion is that it provides room for another pack, I do not think that we can profitably enter into the controversy. Whether worn at the waist or forehead, it is the lengthening of the line that puts the frill on portaging. A pack well set on the shoulders is a foe, but a gentleman; a pack sliding around your neck will play-off side if it can; but a pack six inches down your shoulder is a cowardly assassin with a slung-shot, not content with simple murder, but aiming at mutilation.

At whatever cost, the pack must be kept to the shoulder, or there is an end of all portaging. Human nature can stand a lot of suffering, but not the agony of a pack which wobbles up and down from the *medulla oblongata* to the antepenultimate spinal vertebra.

It has been discovered, quite by chance, that by the correlative stretching of the neck, the lengthening of the line may be counteracted. An old portager can slip his neck in and out like a telescope, and it is a grand sight to see him paying it out when the tump-line runs free, and taking in the slack when she tightens up a bit. The ordinary run of us are not so gifted. We are slow in action and not able to anticipate the vagaries of the line, and so are forced to make occasional halts and set out necks according to our judgment. This is the real reason for our objection to exchanging packs on the portage. After we have figured out the tension of a given pack upon a given tump-line, and framed our anatomy accordingly, we don't favor a change to unknown combinations.

Now, this is why we are all so down upon the pack-snatcher. It is possible that some of those present may not clearly understand exactly what the pack-snatcher is, so I am forced to enter into further explanations.

There is usually a delicate member of every expedition for whose physical welfare the captain is personally responsible to the mother, sister, sweetheart or wife who has consented to his joining the party. *He* is the pack-snatcher. According to statute, the pack-snatcher carries the rods and the rifle, to which, later legislation has added the Kodak. In addition, every portager enjoys the prescriptive right of hanging on to the pack-snatcher any little luggage that is likely to hamper him in his work. If there is a boy in the party, the pack-snatcher has certain easements over the boy; but, as these are conditioned upon the supervision of, and sleeping with, the boy, the pack-snatcher does not draw many practical advantages from the presence in camp of budding manhood.

By the time that his arms are so wearied with the rifle that he has to rest it on the shoulder that the rods have gnawed raw, the forward fish-basket meets the hinder overcoat underneath the arm where he is supposed to carry the axe, and the pack-snatcher commences to yearn for a change of freight. From yearning he rises to suggestion, from suggestion to entreaty, from entreaty to threats, until, at the last halt, the

pack-snatcher is a thief and a robber, and your pack is his prey.

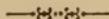
I have given above the reason for objecting to these proceedings on the pack-snatcher's part. There are others as well. The pack-snatcher comes in at the finish of the portage (where the relative beauties of packs are most noted and discussed) fresh as a daisy, with your pack,—a hero ; you limp in with his,—a shirk and a duffer. You can't tell, and he won't, that for fifty minutes you have contended with the cargo which he has nursed for five. The captain makes a note of your comparative stocks of unexhausted energy, and the next time there is a vacancy for a stroll with the Frenchman, you are the peoples' candidate.

Poor, plucky, tired pack-snatcher ought to have the ride.





EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A
"MILLE ROGES" GIRL.



MONDAY—

HAD really an interesting talk with Mr. Frank Drake till late last night; he talked mostly of his hardships at sea and how he enjoyed them, and was reminiscent of the dangers he had passed with his old friend Mr. Jarvis with whom he said he had served under Mr. Blake. He also spoke of his ancestors a great deal, and Mr. Blake's intimate knowledge of them. It is curious how easily I have slipped into using his Christian name, but he is taking—this I have often been told, but—what a pity there is always a "but" with these men, and it is especially "but" in the case of Mr. Drake, ah well!

TUESDAY—

Mr. Young reminds me of a sentence of Macaulay's. Macaulay said that Goethe's criticism of Hamlet made him wonder and despair. Mr. Young makes me wonder and despair. I am afraid of his intellect but I am enamoured of his person. He is such a manly man, yet his imagination is as delicate as a woman's. I am afraid polygamy is the only thing for him. I know no one girl who could appreciate and do justice to his many sided talents.

SATURDAY—

Mr. Law is a strange man. How little he has to say at the beginning of a party, what a lot at the end. From which I suspect, that beneath that calm exterior there are depths as yet unplumbed by woman. I should like to see the woman, who, no doubt, will some day plumb them. What colored fly I wonder will it be that first attracts him.

TUESDAY—

Had a talk with A. Monro Grier to-day. How very correct! How very prepared for every emergency! Should like to catch him unprepared. Must endeavour to do so.

FRIDAY—

At last I got my chance with Mr. Grier. He inadvertently admitted having dreamt last night; I offered to bet him a kiss he would not tell me truthfully what the dream was. He took it. I thought the bait would tempt him. I have discovered that he is a nicer man than ever I thought before. The dream was of course about a girl, and the intense and lofty admiration he evinced for her made me sigh. *Nota bene.* I begged off the kiss.

TUESDAY—

What a pity Mr. Willie Blake is a married man. Not on my own account, at least well——, he could make any woman very happy. He is a clubbable man and clubbable men are all genuine. I could imagine him a leader of men. In him and his friendship one could, I believe, trust for ever. If I have an opportunity, I must get to know him better, and if he would only give me a hint how to do it.

FRIDAY—

What does Mr. Artist Grier think about?

SATURDAY—

My brother tells me that Mr. Graham Thompson is an excellent *raconteur*—He has never seemed so to me.

MONDAY—

I must bet Mr. Sammy Blake a kiss some day. It would be delicious, but I hope I lose. Does he ever give a thought to us girls, and if so what are his thoughts?

WEDNESDAY—

I met to-night the Lorne House men. So kind and attentive—too kind and attentive.

FRIDAY—

Nice talk with Mr. Archie Kerr this morning on the tennis ground. He looked so nice in his flannels. Ah me, I wish

I were sixteen again. What youthful grace, what delicate sentiment. Will he ever lose them? Ye Gods, grant that he may not.

SATURDAY—

I had a stroll with my affectionate and youthful doctor this morning. How many quiet walks and interesting stories Dr. Stimson knows. I can't say I wish I were forty, but twenty years ago he was perhaps even more a gallant than now. He has no angles, I would he had.

WEDNESDAY—

Had a long drive with Mr. Eddy Cronyn this morning, "*sans vous.*" A veritable gentle knight he is. I was smothered beneath politeness and flowers. It would be pleasant to spend a lifetime thus, but could it last? I fear me not. Perhaps such chivalry conceals enormous ambition, in which case alas for us women.

FRIDAY—

Short talk with Mr. Edgar to-day at noon. Tried hard to indoctrinate him with something of the feminine temperament.

SATURDAY—

Mr. Jack Moss is too profound in conversation, but relieves it with occasional flashes of purely original wit.

SATURDAY MORNING—

I lay awake long this morning, thinking of—myself. I wonder which is the *real me*. The one that talked and laughed with all those men last night, or the one who tossed and thought this morning. We girls are curious compounds. The men I know are trying to find us out, and we don't know ourselves. Is any girl, I mused, ever wholly and naturally herself? No; not even in her dreams. And what pains men take to learn our hearts. Have we any such things? I think so whenever alone with a man I like; which makes me think I have more hearts than one. Then which is the real one? This is rather a serious question, for I suppose some day some man will ask me for it, and perhaps not till then

shall I find out. What actresses we are and what susceptible spectators the men. A pretty face, a good figure, a little rivalry, and the curtain is rung down and the play is over.

SUNDAY MORNING—

My wakening thoughts this morning were on my host and hostess. What a huge debt they are daily incurring who are their guests here. It would take ten of my poor little hearts to make one of theirs, but I feel that contact with them is making mine bigger every day—a blessed influence which I hope will lessen *my* debt at least. But one thing I have against them both, we are all, all too readily forgiven.



LEFT BEHIND.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD-BYE.

THE hawsers are let go, and the steamer, grinding against the wharf, moves slowly out. The farewell Kodak has been snapped at the instant when the sparse company ashore attempts to respond to the chorus of *Au revoir mes amis*, and imprints a picture of a group of people who try to look bright with a tear in their eyes, and to be tuneful with a lump in their throats. The current catches the stem of the boat, swinging her fenders clear of the wharf, and, as she steams ahead, we get a view in violent perspective of a crowded ship's-side from which necks are craned, and hands, hats and handkerchiefs are waving adieu.

The boat heads fairly up the river, and, at the distance where faces are rendered indistinguishable, the great bulk of the stern swings round and obliterates the group for'ard. Then we see the small doors at the after end thrown open, and a little company emerges. Someone is standing in their midst with his hand held concave next his mouth, and the Indian war whoop comes to us faint but clear.

"Mary dear," says a lady who is almost breathless with the effort of dancing "hands round" with two other persons who are, with her, the remaining representatives of a large and happy household.

"Mary dear, you know you are asked out on your war-cry ; give them an answer."

A tall girl steps forward, and, holding herself erect, with her head thrown slightly back, launches on the silence of the Bay, a shrill, vibrating cry that chills the listeners' blood, and fills the caves and cliffs with an echo that has been dead since hatred died between the white man and the red.

CHAPTER II.

FALLING LEAF AND FADING TREE.

THE happy household above referred to was reduced, as I mentioned, to three; and, as the domestic retainers had also lessened in number to a sum amounting to one—who left us every morning at eleven—it behoved us to be active in the preparation of such meals as were not of so substantial a character as to make it necessary to journey up to Hotel Chamard for their consumption. So we did our own cooking. A little before the lunch hour there might have been heard coming from the direction of the kitchen the clatter of dishes, the rasping sound of a knife being drawn across toast, or a scream that denoted some dire mishap in the preparation of scrambled eggs.

The days passed cheerfully enough for the most part, and the complete accord in which we lived was evidence of the fact that a group of three friendly souls may, equally with two, be very good company. But in the mind of one there arose a spirit of melancholy. Whether it was caused by the indigestible quality of the pickles at Chamard's, or was the result of occasional insomnia induced by the nocturnal perambulations of a herd of cows with bells attached, or whether it was, as he would fain believe, his natural sensitiveness to that subtle shade of sadness which is spread over the land when golden leaves are falling, I cannot tell: none of us three can tell; but certain it is that he exhibited one of the most unmistakable symptoms of depression of spirits—he produced a poem. It ran thus:—

There are lessons learnt in autumn,
But alone by noble hearts;
At the schools one isn't taught 'em,
Yet they come to men of parts.

How, like leaves from off the tree,
Falls the verdure from our souls,
When, to use hyperbole,
We are cross old hyper-boles.

How we sadden with our presence,
When our wit's no longer keen,
Those whose blooming adolescence
Seems by contrast ever green.

Trees too, when they're sear and yellow,
Strain and toss with every wind,
Losing leaves, like some old fellow
All whose words escape his mind.

Similes are always tiresome ;
Parallels must always bore ;
And the truth I'll never nigher come
Plugging at this metaphor.

Someone then will kindly tell me
When too wearisome I wax ;
Or, in metaphor, will fell me
With a keen ironic axe.

At this high poetic level
I could win more glory yet ;
But I won't, you'd say "The Devil
Take you for his Laureate."



CHAPTER III. SOCIETY ON THE "RIDGE."

WE were immensely popular. No social gathering was complete without us. We were on intimate terms with the best families. There was something so aristocratic about the bearing of two members of our trio that the most exclusive of our neighbors coveted the distinction which would be gained by being on terms of close friendship with them; and, as for the third member of our party, he was admitted into the inner circle on the discovery by Mrs. Montmorenci Stimson, that, at a period of extreme famine, during one of the early crusades, one of her own ancestors had been presented with the osseous portions of a sardine by a De Wyly Grier. Almost every evening we dined or supped at the house of one or other of our friends. As the pink light faded in the eastern sky our well appointed *planche* would draw up at the southern entrance, and McNichol, with a soothing word to the steed that champed and fretted at the delay, would announce that the carriage was in waiting. Then the door would be thrown open, and, in the bustle and excitement of the departure, with a good deal of running up and down the verandah steps, a disjointed conversation, somewhat after the model established by Ollendorf, would ensue:—

"Have you got the guide to the art of polite conversation?"

"No, but I left the back door open." (Rushes up steps and disappears into the house.)

"Do you think we ought to bring his songs?"

"Don't ask me, I've lost my gum-shoes."

"I don't know a bit what hour they asked us for."

"Take my arm."

"Have you got the latch-key?"

"One more step—that's right."

"Wait a minute; there's that cow prancing on the flower-beds." (Exit, brandishing umbrella.)

"Dear me! shall we ever be off?"

"I don't know, but one of my gum-shoes is already." (The umbrella comes back, owner panting.)

"That's all right; I've chivvied her onto the 'Elliot's' verandah; go ahead McNichol!"

CHAPTER IV.

LEAVING YET LOVING.

HERE was a day when it seemed that we had stayed too long. A day when Cap a l'Aigle, whose face we had learned to read in many a changing mood, frowned at us from under a lowering sky. A sullen morning; and at mid-day a wind that went moaning to the angles of the house. The little gleam of surf that breaks always out there on the bar, broadened and whitened and ran up angrily over the buff-colored patch of sand. A pall of black cloud moved up to cover the further peaks of the Laurentians; and spread its folds till it deadened the green of the nearer hills. The rank of aspens fronting the house bent in the squalls, filling the air with swirling leaves, and with a sound like the progress of unseen hosts. At evening a livid copper burnished the lower surface of the Western cloud and tinged the masses piled up in the East.

In-doors it was a night for drawing chairs close up round the fire, and for subdued conversation tending to retrospect; and the flames went rushing up the big chimney at each gust that struck the roof. Then came bed-time, and a procession with candle-lights blowing aslant in the draught; then sleep, fitful sleep, that awoke to the morning of our last day. A brighter day, but the last; filled with the commonplace of final arrangements that must be made in a house that is sealed for a Northern winter; a practical day; but I am sure that when, with our time dwindling down to minutes, the piano, our last care, standing half in its case on the verandah, it was suggested that we should sing farewell, it was not without a sense that something had been held in check that the trio rendered, "Leaving yet Loving."



CLOSING THE HOUSE.

THEY have gone away by twos and threes,—groups feigning gaiety have stood upon the steamer's deck and answered song by song, shout by shout, and, as the distance lengthened signal by signal.

Solitary ones have departed in the night,—so silently that the vacant chair at breakfast is needed to remind us of their absence.

Close up the ranks! Shorten the table! A glass for the dead already, and hurrah for the next that dies! The breaking up has come; the Summer is over.

Brightly as ever falls the sunlight on river and mountain, but the shadow is deepening,—the shadow of the end. Through all rings the knell. The Summer is over. The Summer is over.

And so comes the day when that house where many a careless hour full of happiness has been passed, must be deserted. For the last time you hear your footsteps sound in the silent darkened rooms. You relentlessly lock and bar that door through which the breeze wandered at its will through the long bright Summer days. I tell you it is like closing the eyes of a dead friend, and leaving him with cold crossed hands upon his breast.

For surely these familiar rooms and weather-beaten walls have in them some sentiency,—else how could they look such melancholy farewells. Do they sadly think of the desolation of black winter,—of the piling snow against door and window and the roar of the ice-strown sea coming up through the white-clad bending pines? Of the long days and nights of dreariness before summer shall come again on the soft South wind. When the bitter storm is

eddying round the gables, and answering with its shriek to the clash of the grinding ice, will not spectral forms wander hither and thither, from room to room, and group about the hearth? Will not echoes of laughter and music come forth from their imprisonment within the walls,—the very ghosts of sounds?

If it is permitted to spirits to return and visit the spots of earth that they loved best, then will I sometime sit, an unnoticed guest, among some group around the familiar fire, or unseen and silent watch the moon rise over the river, tracking to my feet her silver pathway. If indeed spirits are immortal, why should they keep aloof from their former walks. Is not that soft-breathing evening air like the half-melancholy sigh of some gentle ghost who comes to look again on friendly scenes and faces? Nay, is not the very air full of kindly spectres—of recollections overwhelmed in years, of hopes and wishes dead but ever unburied. of old-time loves, of kind words said, of songs once heard,—a second atmosphere transfusing the soul, and its very breath.

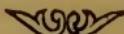
As I wander through the darkened place,—one day ago filled with light and life, the very door-handles seem loth to leave my grasp, and the chairs extend their arms as though to give an uncouth hand-shake of good-bye. The floors creak as from other footfalls than my own, and startled I look back to see who follows close at my heel.

From the eaves the rain drips heavily and a light garment of mist clothes the cedars which now look never so funereal and solemn. The clanging of the door pains me and I feel as though I were doing something unkind to a creature helpless in my hands.

How heavy one's footsteps sound, and to what dirge-like rhythm do they keep time.

Half-hidden through the trees the house looks reproachfully at me.

How thick the mist is; I cannot see it now.



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